

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. VICKY HARTZLER

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 25, 2021

Mrs. HARTZLER. Madam, Speaker, I was unable to vote. Had I been present, I would have voted: YEA on Roll Call No. 18.

PROVIDING FOR EXCEPTION TO
LIMITATION AGAINST APPOINT-
MENT OF PERSONS AS SEC-
RETARY OF DEFENSE WITHIN
SEVEN YEARS OF RELIEF FROM
ACTIVE DUTY

SPEECH OF

HON. BILL POSEY

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Mr. POSEY. Mr. Speaker, through the National Security Act, Congress required that the Secretary of Defense be from civilian life and placed a limitation on the appointment of former military personnel to that position mandating that a nominee be retired from military service for ten years. In 2008, Congress shortened that period to seven years.

I have several concerns which I would like to express and go on record in opposition to providing a waiver. First, I thank the General for his service to our nation in uniform. I have reservations about providing yet another waiver from the law intended to preserve civilian leadership in the role of Secretary of Defense. If confirmed as Secretary of Defense by the U.S. Senate, after fewer than five years from his last military assignment, General Lloyd Austin (Ret.) will be expected to uphold the principles of civilian control of the military.

My hope is that General Austin's focus will be ensuring that our nation is prepared to meet head-on the threat posed by adversaries including China, Russia, and Iran. He should follow and focus on the bipartisan 2018 National Defense Strategy that stresses the need to strengthen our military for potential major conflict. Mr. Austin should work to preserve the strategic nuclear triad, protect and ensure American space superiority, and maintain Naval supremacy as cornerstones of our freedom.

Serving as our nation's Secretary of Defense is an awesome responsibility and I await the U.S. Senate vetting General Austin as the U.S. Senate has the responsibility under the Constitution of reviewing Presidential nominees.

IN RECOGNITION OF HER SERVICE:
MS. JUDITH MITCHELL

HON. ALAN S. LOWENTHAL

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 25, 2021

Mr. LOWENTHAL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Judith Mitchell and her career of public service.

After 11 years of dedicated public service, Ms. Mitchell will be retiring from public service.

Ms. Mitchell served with honor as Rolling Hills Estate Mayor and Council Member for her city, Southland, her state and the nation. Ms. Mitchell showed her fairness, depth of knowledge and dedication to improving the quality of life for all.

During her political career, Ms. Mitchell was elected to represent 51 cities in the western portion of Los Angeles County which she represented through the Governing Board of the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Ms. Mitchell was then appointed to the California Air Resources Board under Governor Edmund J. Brown, and additionally served as the President of the League of California Cities where she chaired several key environmental committees. Her work on these two agencies, helped to spur technological innovation to create jobs and economic growth in the Southland and across the nation.

Ms. Mitchell's legacy for clean air policies and her unwavering support for green technologies has not only helped those most impacted in her community, but these efforts have a direct impact on my Congressional District. These clean air advancements will also assist other States and regions to help meet federal public health standards and build a foundation for the United States technological and industrial leadership.

It is with great pride and gratitude that I extend my best wishes to Ms. Judith Mitchell upon her retirement and ask that my distinguished colleagues join me in honoring her.

CONDEMNING IRRESPONSIBLE
DEFAMATION IN CONGRESS

HON. PAUL A. GOSAR

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 25, 2021

Mr. GOSAR. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my dismay that members of Congress are making unfounded claims of treason and sedition against their colleagues without evidence to back their outlandish claims. By this, I mean the numerous members alleging that members aided in "reconnaissance" tours for those individuals who would storm the Capitol during the Electoral College certification.

These accusations leveled by several members make these bold statements without offering a shred of evidence. In fact, over 30 members put their names on a letter which made these allegations without even an indication to whom they were referring to. In the absence of fact, these accusations have allowed conspiracy to permeate the narrative from the deepest enclaves of the Internet. Leftist media sources, from major 24 hour broadcast companies to blogs, have picked up on these hollow accusations, and the effects have been damaging.

Since evidence and due process have been replaced with speculation, members of Congress are being deemed guilty of these crimes, including myself. In fact, there is now a narrative running that since I supported the objection to the certification of the count, I must be one of the members guilty of this treason. Multiple media sources have reported as "fact" that me and other objectors conducted tours of the Capitol to do some type of "reconnaissance". This is patently and un-

equivocally false. They offered no proof of this scurrilous and defamatory falsehood. I asked Capitol Police to pull and preserve all video footage from House security cameras which can establish with finality who, if anyone, gave even one tour during the days leading to the unrest. I can say this: my office has not given a tour since February 2020. The continuing publication of this defamation by members of Congress and media is unprofessional, unethical, and actionable.

The increase in violent, threatening messages received in our offices because of the irresponsible political messaging from my colleagues in coordination with their media pals is sickening and indicative of our larger societal issues, such as a media which tells their viewers what they know to be true, not what the facts are. So, let me set the record straight. I have not given a tour of the Capitol since 2017, and my staff has not given a tour since they closed to the public early in 2020 as a COVID-19 response. Further, at no time did anyone with Stop the Steal talk to me about violence, and my efforts to speak to the American people and fight for my constituents were guided by the First Amendment and the Electoral Count Act of 1878.

Madam Speaker, the purpose of this body is to serve as the voice of the American people, a voice which speaks with honesty to conduct the business of this country and contribute to the overall good. Yet, the passions of humanity can undermine these principles, and these unfounded accusations are a menace to the traditions of this body. Therefore, Madam Speaker, I condemn my colleagues irresponsible actions and their use of their official powers to fuel a media spectacle for their own political benefit. Their willingness to set these mistruths into the public and not interject when the truth is deviated from and innocent people are blamed is defamation, conspiratorial, and faulty justice. Much like McCarthyism or the witch hunt conducted these last four years, history will not look kindly on this abuse of Congressional power, and therefore I implore my colleagues to either set the record straight with evidence or retract these claims immediately to resecure their position in history.

REINTRODUCTION OF THE COM-
PREHENSIVE BREAST RECON-
STRUCTION ACT

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, January 25, 2021

Mr. HASTINGS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce the Comprehensive Breast Reconstruction Act. This legislation will bring Medicaid and Medicare programs into compliance with the Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998, and will expand post-mastectomy breast reconstruction patients' access to modern and innovative procedures, products, and therapies to support their return to a healthy normal.

In 2020 alone, almost 280,000 new instances of breast cancer were estimated to have been diagnosed, and anticipated deaths from breast cancer were over 42,000. However, the breast cancer survival rate has steadily increased faster than the rate of new diagnoses, which is believed to be related to